



# WASHOE COUNTY

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: January 12, 2016

**DATE:** December 22, 2015  
**TO:** Board of County Commissioners  
**FROM:** Scott Sosebee, Interim Court Administrator, Reno Justice Court  
325-6543, [ssosebee@washoecounty.us](mailto:ssosebee@washoecounty.us)

**THROUGH:** Scott Pearson, Judge Reno Justice Court

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to acknowledge a Specialty Court General Fund Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court [\$116,815.00 for FY16, no match required], paid in quarterly installments retroactive to November 1, 2015; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments. (All Commission Districts)

### SUMMARY

In September 2015, Reno Justice Court applied to the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada (JSCN) to receive funding to create a specialty court for a Community Court, Young Offenders Court, and Sex Trafficking Victims. On October 29, 2015, Reno Justice Court received notification that the sum of \$116,815.00 had been approved for FY16 with the first quarterly distribution of \$38,939.00 occurring on November 12, 2015. The remaining installments will be distributed in February 2016 and May 2016. The grant is being accepted retroactively, as funding was received shortly after notification of the award.

**Washoe County's Strategic Objective supported by this item:** Safe, secure and healthy communities.

### PREVIOUS ACTION

The 2013 Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 415 authorizing counties to establish Community Court pilot project within one of their Justice Court(s). Washoe County established a Community Court pilot in the Reno Justice Court in October 2013. Since that date the program has operated without specific funding from the State. 79 defendants have successfully completed the program to date.

### BACKGROUND

Reno Justice Court has operated the Court Compliance Program (CCP) since 2000, focusing its efforts on defendants with substance abuse issues. Over the years, it has

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become apparent that many defendants also have significant mental health and other specialized needs that must be addressed concurrently with the substance abuse in order to be successful. In order to respond to the specific needs of the Washoe County community, the Reno Justice Court has begun to incorporate the concepts of the Community Court model, as supported by the Center for Court Innovation and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

In 2013, the Nevada Legislature approved authorizing legislation for any Justice Court in Nevada to establish a Community Court as a sentencing alternative for most misdemeanors (AB 415). The Legislature directed each county wishing to create a Community Court to collaborate with private, state and local governmental entities to coordinate and determine the services and treatment to be offered to defendants.

Community courts are neighborhood focused courts that attempt to harness the power of the justice system to address local problems by focusing on creative partnerships and problem solving. Through the Community Court, Reno Justice Court partners with Washoe County Department of Social Services and other nonprofit organizations to jointly coordinate efforts to rehabilitate defendants.

AB 415 requires all community courts to evaluate each defendant transferred to the Community Court to determine whether services or treatment is likely to assist the defendant to modify his or her behavior or obtain skills which may prevent them from engaging in further criminal activity. AB 415 also requires all community court participants complete community service as part of the program. The average defendant completes approximately 50 hours of community service. Finally, pursuant to AB415, all defendants that successfully complete community court may have their case dismissed and their record sealed.

In October 2013 the Washoe County Commission started the first Community Court in the State in the Reno Justice Court. The Washoe County Commission subsequently allocated funding for a Deputy District Attorney to participate in the program. The Community Court has otherwise operated without specific funding.

Governor Sandoval's 2015 budget provided for 3 million dollars for specialty courts in the State. The Reno Justice Court applied for funding for the Washoe County Community Court. The new money would be used for three tracks, the first will be the community court diversion track. The second is a Human Trafficking Intervention Court for victims of sex trafficking. A separate docket will allow for more specialized attention to be given to the mental health and medical needs of these defendants, such as trauma, PTSD, and depression. The program intends to develop safe housing options for these defendants as they receive programming designed to help them avoid future exploitation and decrease involvement in the criminal justice system.

Finally, RJC applied for funding for a third track to focus on the special needs of Young Offenders, ages 18 to 24. Research indicates the brain is not fully developed until around age 25, helping to explain the impulsiveness and emotional immaturity exhibited by many young offenders. The Young Offenders Court will allow the Community Court

Judge to work more closely with these young adults to redirect them to educational and vocational resources and avoid further criminal contact.

On October 23, 2015, Reno Justice Court was approved for funding of \$116,815.00 to serve up to 100 participants in FY16.

**GRANT AWARD SUMMARY**

**Project/Program Name:** Community Court, Young Offenders Court, and Sex Trafficking Victims.

**Scope of the Project:** The scope of the Community Court project is to provide an alternative to sentencing a person who is charged with a misdemeanor crime, other than a misdemeanor constituting an act of domestic violence or driving under the influence. The Young Offenders Court, and Sex Trafficking Victims tracks will provide specific intervention for those risk groups.

**Benefit to Washoe County Residents:** The Reno Justice Court Community Court will provide an alternative approach to sentencing that will reduce the number of defendants incarcerated and rehabilitate its participants to become productive members of society, in cooperation with the District Attorney's office, Public Defenders Office, Social Services, and local Law Enforcement Agencies. This program is designed to help reduce recidivism and incarceration population.

**On-Going Program Support:** On-going support of this program will be partially funded through program fees paid by participants. Reno Justice Court will continue to apply for additional grant funds from the JSCN on an annual basis.

**Award Amount:** \$116,814.00 (annually)

**Grant Period:** November 1, 2015 – December 31, 9999

**Funding Source:** Supreme Court, AOC, FY16 General Fund for Specialty Courts

**Pass through From:** N/A

**CFDA Number:** N/A

**Grant ID Number:** N/A

**Match Amount and Type:** N/A

**Indirect Cost Rate (applicable to the award):** N/A

**Special Terms & Conditions:** N/A

**Sub-Awards and Contracts:** N/A

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Should the board accept this grant award and approve these amendments, the adopted budget will be increased by \$116,814.00 in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

<b>Cost Object</b>	<b>G/L Account</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Revenue:</b>		
IO 20420	471220 – Court Admin Assess.	\$ 116,814.00
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
IO 20420	701120 – Part Time wages	\$ 15,000.00
IO 20420	710100 – Professional Services	\$ 30,000.00
IO 20420	710300 – Operating Supplies	\$ 22,314.00
IO 20420	710500 – Other Expenses	\$ 44,500.00
IO 20420	710714 – Referral Services	\$5,000.00

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners acknowledge a Specialty Court General Fund Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court [\$116,814.00 for FY16, no match required], paid in quarterly installments retroactive to November 1, 2015; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments.

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to acknowledge a Specialty Court General Fund Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court [\$116,814.00 for FY16, no match required], paid in quarterly installments retroactive to November 1, 2015; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments.”

- cc: John Slaughter, County Manager  
Joey Orduna Hastings, Assistant County Manager  
Keith Munro, District Attorney  
Mark Mathers, Budget Manager  
Mary Solorzano, Acting Comptroller  
Gabrielle Enfield, Grants Administrator